

My name is Todd Czuprinski and I am the Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of New Britain. I am here today to speak in favor of Proposed HB # 80 as it directly affects the young members of our organization.

The Boys and Girls of New Britain was established in 1891 and has always been a safe haven to the less fortunate children from the city of New Britain. We have always operated as a "Drop in Center". This means that anyone who is a member of the Club can drop in and participate whenever the Club is open. This is so important in New Britain, especially for teens. We charge a minimal annual membership fee of \$20 and provide scholarships to those who cannot afford it. There are no additional fees. Our goal here today is to keep our doors open to those who need it the most. Proposed HB # 80 will allow us to continue to do this.

What we are seeking is an amendment to section 19a-421 of the general statutes exempting us from youth camp licensure requirements during the summer season. Understand that we want to continue to run as a drop in center as we always have, but the statute as written can be interpreted in many different ways depending on who is reading it. Being read in such a way that defines our drop in program as a youth camp will force us to become licensed. This will have a significant negative impact on our young members. The intent of the statute is for the safety and welfare of young children but in our case it will have the opposite affect. If we have to abandon our drop in program and operate as a licensed youth camp it will close the door to approximately 600 children and eliminate all teen programming during the summer. This will leave many of them home unsupervised and worse yet, many roaming the streets. This will not benefit the safety and welfare of the children who attend the Boys and Girls Club of New Britain.

I have never seen our Board of Directors and staff so energized on any single issue. It is so important that we be allowed to continue to provide for our members as we always have. We are not here asking the State for money. This is a technical revision of the law as written. We do not have reduced safety standards at the club. We follow all local health and safety standards and those set by our national organization to remain a member in good standing. This is an established organization who has been providing quality programming for 115 years. Proposed HB #80 will allow us to continue to do that. One again the number. 600 children left with no place to go and the elimination of all teen programming during the summer. Please understand how important this to us and please vote for HB # 80.

Thank you